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Conflict and Organizational Effectiveness: A Critical Analysis

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Introduction: Conflict and its Nature

As long as organizations continue to use teams to execute tasks, conflict cannot be avoided because it is an inevitable aspect of teamwork. Conflict is an outcome of behaviors. It is an integral part of human life. Whenever there is interaction, there is conflict. Conflict is a cap of shades and therefore means different 'things' to different peoples: expression of hostility, negative attitudes, antagonism, aggression, rivalry, and misunderstanding. It is also associated with situations that involve contradictory interest between two opposing groups.

Conflict has been studied over centuries by many great minds. But a more systematic study has been possible only since the twentieth century (Schellenberg 1996). With the emergence of political anthropology as a special branch of social anthropology, marked by the publication of "African Political Systems" (1940), the study of conflict resolution became prominent. However, theoretical controversies over the subject of conflict and its resolution have survived a long history of the study. From the very outset, scholars do not agree upon whether conflict is a disjunctive process or sociation. Some scholars have contended that conflict has a divisive effect. For instance, Durkheim (cited in Sipova, 1989) considered conflict as an abnormal phenomenon. He used the term *anomie* or pathology to describe it. Similarly, Wilson and Kolb (1949, cited in Colser, 1964) believed that conflict has a disjunctive effect. Many other scholars have repeated this view.

Park and Burgess (1921) and Simmel (1955), cited in Colser (1964) argue that every interaction among men is a sociation, so is conflict. Conflict is a means to solve and avert complete fission, thereby preserve some kind of unity. Similarly, Bohannan (1967: XI - XIV) characterizes conflict to be as basic as culture is in society, which possibly controlled and utilized profitably for better cultural development and maintenance of social order. Schellenberg (1996) states that conflict is neither bad nor good, but one of the essentials in human social life. Gluckman (1956), Gulliver (1963) and Nanda (1994) agree with the view that conflict is a part of social life and society is impossible without it. Further, Marxian view conflict not only as built into the social system but also as the primary stimulus for social change (Seymour-Smith, 1986: 51).

Robbins (2005) defined conflict as a process that begins where one party perceives that another party has negatively affected, or is about to negatively affects something that the first party cares about . This is a very apt definition emphasizing that conflict is about perception not necessarily real hard facts. It points to the emotional nature of conflict, by referring to a word

like ¯care. It states that more than one party is involved and that there may be future component attached to it.

Conflict means to be in opposition to one another. It refers to disagreement between people or members of organizations. Such disagreement is inherent in relationships between all human beings. Larfela (1988) concurs with this view when he defines conflict as: "Part of the competition process that is basic to the survival and successful evolution of the species, homosapiens and to his search for new and better ways to cope with limited resources and stress from environmental change." According to this definition it is obvious that conflict always exists between people, groups of people, members of an organization and between organizations which are related in one way or another.

Rivers (2005) published research that suggested that the mere fact of categorization (between us and them) is enough to cause conflict. They term this the social identity theory. This categorization is exactly what happens when groups are formed; representing different functions within an organization and it support the notion that is inevitable. (Lewis, 1997). Appelbaum, Abdallah and Shapiro (1999) further builds on this by stating that conflict is a process of social interaction. It involves a struggle over claims to resources, power and status, beliefs, preferences and desires. Darling and Walker (2001) link this idea to the organization by stating that, even when conflict is a natural phenomenon in social relations, it can nevertheless be managed within companies.

Organizational conflict refers to the condition of misunderstanding or disagreement that is caused by the perceived or actual opposition in the needs, interests and values among people who work together. Organizational conflict may also be termed as workplace conflict. The conflicts occur during situations where there is an interaction between two or more members of an organization involving contradictory opinions. These opinions may be brought forward concerning any particular decision or task that has taken place within the organization. Organizational conflict, in simpler terms, implies to the outcomes of the human interaction that commences with the declaration of a member of the organization that his values, attitudes or goals are not compatible with the attitude, values or goals that have been set by the organization and needs to be followed by the members of the organization (Siira, 2012). The incompatibility of the opinions may arise between two members of the organization working in the same group, between two groups of members in the organization or within a person who is working member of an organization. There are several types of conflicts that may arise within an organization. The various types of conflicts are the task conflicts, process conflicts and the relationship conflicts.

Conflicts in organization are influenced by a variety of factors like the lack of clarity in the responsibility of the team members, the interpersonal relationship that is shared by the members of the organization. The scarcity of the needed resources may lead to the rise of conflict between the members of the organization. The disagreement of the members on the fields of interest may also lead to the conflicts and altercations within the workplace. The main causes of the organizational conflict are the disruption of communication, lack of accountability on the part of the members (Marion & Gonzales, 2013). Misunderstanding on the part of the employees may also lead to conflicts within the organization. Organizational conflict may also arise from the

conditions where the targets that are set by the superiors are not met by the employees who work under their supervision (Bhat *et al*, 2013).

As there is nothing pre-determined about its course or development, it seems erroneous to view conflict from a negative perspective only, as destructive or dysfunctional. It is true that conflict may be uncomfortable, it may even be a source of problems, but it is absolutely necessary if change is to occur, if organizations are to survive and adapt. Organizational change and innovation does not just happen, it requires a stimulant. That stimulant is conflict.

Administrators must accept the need to influence the developmental dynamics of a conflict, so that the parties' attitudes and actions will lead to better coordination and a more appropriate interdependence. They must not seek to stifle or eliminate organizational conflict for that is hardly a realistic goal. As Rico has noted, an organization devoid of conflict " may indicate autocracy, uniformity, stagnation and mental fixity." It would also be protecting only the vested interests of the status quo. Administrators must accept and indeed occasionally encourage conflict, because change and other desirable consequences are products of conflict. The challenge administrators face is to utilize such conflict management techniques that would ensure that as a conflict passes from a latent to a manifest phase, it proceeds towards its potential and realizes its constructive values.

Understanding the Dynamics in Explanations of Conflict

A. *Traditional School View of Conflic*t: This school views conflicts as bad for organizations because it is disruptive, unnatural and represents a form of deviant behavior which, should be controlled and changed if the objectives of the organization is to be achieved. To the traditional school, conflict situations can have tragic consequences for some people and adverse effect on organizational performance. Both the scientific management approach and the administrative school of management relied heavily on developing such organizational structures that would specify tasks, rules, regulations, procedures and authority relationships so that if a conflict develops than these built in rules and regulations would identify and correct problems of conflict. General view was that conflict indicates a malfunction within a group and must be avoided. This view proposed that very little value ever stemmed from conflict, Robbins (2005) called this the traditional view.

B. *Human Relation school view of Conflict*: According to this similar theory that conflict is avoidable by creating an environment of goodwill and trust. Management has always been concerned with avoiding conflict if possible and resolving it soon if it occurs.

C. *The Interactionist school view of Conflict*: Townsend (1985) sees conflict as a sign of a healthy organization up to a point. A good manager according to him, does not try to eliminate conflict, he tries to keep it from wasting the energies of his people, if you are the boss and your people fight you openly when they think you are wrong, that's healthy. If your people fight each other openly in your presence for what they believed in, that's healthy. But keep all the conflict eyeball to eyeball. Robins (1998) believes that conflict is a positive force and necessary for effective performance. This approach encourages a minimum level of conflict within the group

in order to encourage self-criticism, change and innovation and to help prevent apathy or too great a tolerance for harmony and the status quo. Conflict is an inevitable feature of organizational life and should be judged by its performance.

D. ***Integrationist school view of Conflict*****:** This is the most recent perspective and explicitly argues that some conflict should not only be seen as good or bad but rather that some conflict is absolutely necessary for a group to perform effectively (De Dreu & Van de Vliert, 1997).

Conflicts and Organizations

Three distinct criteria define the role of an administrator in an organization: planning, resource allocation and conflict management. There is no doubt that managing conflict permeates every aspect of the administrative role. Awareness of the various forms of conflict management that can be employed at different stages of the development of a conflict is vital, if administrators are to organize efforts towards influencing the conflict situation, the parties' attitudes or their behavior. In addition to that, effective conflict management requires recognition of the sources that generate a conflict. What then are the sources of organizational conflicts?

Robbins identifies three sources of organizational conflict and indicates that an understanding of the source of a conflict improves the probability of effective conflict management. The main factors which serve as sources of conflict are identified as:

a. communicational (conflicts arising from misunderstandings or misinterpretation etc.),
b. structural (conflicts related to organizational roles), and
c. personal (conflicts stemming from individual differences).

Methods of conflict management which are appropriate in one case may not necessarily be appropriate when applied to a conflict generated from another source.

Here, one can look at a different perspective which traces the source of organizational conflict to the unit of analysis involved. Units of analysis are the parties to a conflict. They perceive, initiate and sustain a conflict. Their characteristics specify the conditions which affect the course of a conflict and determine the mode of its management. Thus, we have conflicts that originate in the individual person, conflicts that have their basis in the relationship between individuals, and conflicts that occur as a result of interactions between groups. These may be described as (a) intrapersonal conflict, (b) interpersonal conflict, and (c) interdepartmental conflict. Each of these categories raises different questions about the three interrelated components of conflict and each emphasizes different aspects of conflict management.

(a) ***Intrapersonal Conflict***. Intrapersonal conflict is internal to the individual (though its effects can profoundly influence organizational functioning) and is perhaps the most difficult form of conflict to analyze and manage. Intrapersonal conflict is basically a conflict between two incompatible tendencies. It arises when a stimulus evokes two different and incompatible tendencies and the individual is required to discriminate between these tendencies. In such a situation, it is common for individuals to experience frustrations and to allow their conflict situation to be expressed in a range of behavioral strategies ranging from apathy and boredom to

absenteeism, excessive drinking or destructive behavior. If such behavioral consequences are to be avoided, then it is essential to diagnose individual perception and utilize some techniques that would reduce anxiety-eliciting stimuli and increase consonance between individual behavior and organizational requirements.

(b) ***Interpersonal Conflict.*** Interpersonal conflict emphasizes the interaction of human factors in an organization. Here we are concerned with these factors as they appear in a dyadic relationship. We can broadly suggest two classes of factors as conflict sources. These are:

(i) *Personal***.** Individuals are not identical, constant or consistent. When two individuals are brought together and kept together, each with his own qualities, needs and skills, a conflict may ensue if their attributes are not meshed together in a coordinated way. Interaction between individuals with different attitudes, values and needs can produce conflict behavior and affect organizational performance.

(ii) *Functional***.** Individuals in organizations have roles which are expected sets of behavior associated with their position. In theory, individuals are not expected to engage in any discretionary behavior. Such specification would be consistent with organizational preferences for consistency and predictability. In practice, however, role specifications tend to be ambiguous and incomplete, and in their interaction with others, some individuals often feel dissatisfied with their role or position, or they may feel that their aspirations for higher positions are being frustrated. Interpersonal conflict can be accounted for, to a great extent, in terms of the incumbents' roles and their expectations in particular situations.

(c) ***Interdepartmental Conflict***. The third major cause of organizational conflict is structural. Organizations are designed around product lines, regions or technical specialties. These activities are assigned to departments that often have mutually exclusive structured interests and goals and that interact within a framework of scarce resources and task dependence. When resources are relatively fixed and when one department's gain is at the expense of another, conflict should be expected. If two sub-units in an organizational system have differentiated goals and are functionally interdependent, conditions exist for conflict. Interdependence produces the need for collaboration, but it also presents occasions for conflict. Other contextual factors which affect the interaction structure between departments and create the conditions for interdepartmental conflict include: different attitudes between line and staff units, organizational size (directly related to level of conflict) and standardization (inversely related to conflict), physical or communicational barriers between departments, unequal access to authority, rewards or organizational resources and ambiguity or uncertainty in assigning tasks or rewards to different departments. These then, are the sources of conflict situations in organizations. How a conflict situation will change over time, how its interrelated components will alter the environment in which it occurs will respond, is dependent upon the administrator's efforts to manage or influence it. This in turn, is related to one's understanding of the source of a specific conflict situation.

Causes of Organizational Conflict

There are several plausible causes of organizational conflicts. Mostly they involve factors such as mismatch of opinions between members of the same team or maybe a difference of understanding between authorities at workplace (Franks *et al*, 2014). A few main reasons for conflicts in organizational environment are discussed below.

(1) Communication Issues

One of the most significant issues of organizational conflicts includes poor communication or miscommunication. Different communication patterns often lead to misinterpretation of various topics, which lead to a false impact on the brain regarding the person talking on the topic. This results in a conflicting attitude on the discussion itself. A simple instance like a manager reassigning a worker‘s task to his/her colleague, but failing to mention it to the concerned worker, or communicating his intentions to the worker before assigning the task, might lead to the employee harboring negative perception about the manager. Repetitive occurrences of this nature in the future might lead to the employee‘s poor organizational conduct as a whole or towards the manager and might lead to serious organizational conflicts. Thus, it can be observed how miscommunication or absence of proper communication leads to conflict within an organization. Hence, poor communication not only gives rise to conflicts in the workplace itself but also negatively affects productivity of the entire working group (Odle-Dusseau, Britt & Greene-Shortridge, 2012).

(2) Organizational Structure

The structure wherein an organization is formed plays a very determining role in the conflict area. A simple example can be observed in the fact that in case of a matrix-structured company, decisional conflicts are almost built-in, as it is specified in the structure itself that an employee should report to two bosses (Gelfand *et al*, 2012). This type of a structure will almost always lead to confusion as the company is segmented into smaller parts, always having two opinions on one issue.

(3) Authority Responsibility Relationship

The design of authority in the organizational structure determines the chances of arising of a conflict. An ill-defined authority–responsibility relationship will definitely lead to a conflict. The lack of consistency in work is observed when such authority-responsibility relationships are not properly or rather clearly defined. Communication problems creep in and crack open wedges of conflict. Intergroup conflicts are usual results of such weak organizational structures (Sonnentag, Unger & Nägel, 2013).

(4) Contradicting Personalities

This encircles one of the most common reasons for conflict in office scenarios. Differences in personality in the workplace are as common and expected as sand on seashore. Employees come to work from different ethnic backgrounds, having had different experiences and harbor a different and individualistic mindset, thus forming a unique character of each to understand. In

the case when one worker fails to understand the other in certain areas or maybe in areas relating to the area of the work assigned to them, conflicts take place (Deyoe & Fox, 2012). A proper instance might include having a straightforward-minded employee who believes in speaking the truth or what he feels directly, without considering the effects of it. This straightforward persona might affect or insult the other workers surrounding if it is such a topic. Sometimes the person with the straightforward attitude might feel offended as well in case the other workers do not behave in that manner with him and keep stuff away from him.

(5) Frustration and Stress

Conflict arises in situations where the parties involved are too stressed out or frustrated with their own work. Stressed out people are more likely to start a quarrel with a properly functioning co-worker. This shall in turn reduce productivity on the overall front. Causes of such stress can be as simple as unwanted noise, lack of privacy, untidy workplace, or very serious such as threats of violence, harassment, extreme negative criticism (Riaz & Junaid, 2012).

(6) Competition centering Resources

Resources like equipment, money or time are usually limited and scarce. It is a very natural phenomenon that competition among workers for such resources is a frequent source of conflict. Cutting-edge gadgets and accessories like laptops and iPhones might be allocated to a certain rank of employees whereas others may be deprived of it. Some employees might hold the view that those technical devices are crucial for their productivity and might revolt in extreme cases. This leads to severe competition at times. Such unhealthy competition gives rise to an unethical environment in the office itself, thus lowering the workplace morale as a whole. This in turn demotes teamwork and encourages individualism (Katz & Flynn, 2013).

(7) Dependency Issues

One of the significant causes of conflict involves task interdependence. The cases where completion of one‘s task involves other co-workers to perform equally their tasks, conflicts regarding efficiency or sincerity of the co-workers, are usually seen. Group projects, like creating an advertisement for an item usually suffers from such conflicts, as one is dependent on the creative team for the main design and layout, the photographer for the visual effects and so on and so forth. Lack of efficiency in one sector holds the potential to disrupt the entire workflow into conflicts (Meier *et al*, 2013).

(8) Incompatible Goals

Goals are an important, rather the most fundamental aspect of an organization. For an organization to run as a well-oiled machine, it needs hard-working employees who have a proper understanding of their individualistic goals. In an organization, incompatibility in goals may arise due to the different ways of compensation of the managers. A typical example can be considered in the case of a sales manager. A sales manager‘s income may be related to the number of sales made for the company. This might tempt an individual to provide customers freebies‘, in order to increase delivery and thus sales. On the other hand, the transportation company‘s income might

be linked to the amount of money it can save on various transportation modes. This leads to a conflict between the two bodies and will be at it until the company resolves the issue via some sort of compensation.

(9) Difference in Values

Sometimes there exists a certain age gap between the employees at the workplace. Although this is mostly a good thing as the junior get a lot of experience and can as well learn from the senior people, but this also leads to certain conflicts between people sharing a generation gap. The values have changed down the time due to the advancement of society, and the society has become more open and accepting too many new reforms, which may not always sit right with the older generation. The difference in values is not always the harbinger of conflicts but the arrogance to, of not accepting such change is. Dealing on the lines of such values, quarrels often breakout and insults only fuel such conflicts (Cahn & Abigail, 2014).

Outcomes of organizational Conflict

Conflicts in general, are problematic for the organization as a whole. A few of such negative impacts are mentioned below:

(a) Mental strain is caused between both the parties involved in the conflict.
(b) Mutual discontentment is harbored between the two conflicting parties.
(c) During issues of arguments, feelings of defeat or domination might be felt which would decrease individual morale or in severe cases might lead to feelings of harassment in workplaces.
(d) A group under constant subordinate conflict might feel threatened.
(e) Communication breakdown is a common result of conflicts as well.
(f) Extreme and repetitive case of conflicts might lead to resignation of an employee.
(g) Once an atmosphere of mistrust builds up, this naturally obstructs proper functioning of the members as a team.
(h) Productivity is usually lowered a lot, if the conflicts are not resolved (Russ, 2013).

All conflicts are not absolutely detrimental although there are several downsides of organizational conflicts. Some of the noteworthy positive or favorable outcomes are as follows:

(a) Due to conflicts, a broad range of ideas are considered, thus resulting in a better and more universally accepted idea across the organization.
(b) Inaccurate assumption on various topics is surfaced.
(c) There is an overall increase in creativity and participation around the office.
(d) Individual views that might be sensitive and necessary are acknowledged as well as corrected which in turn help in learning.
(e) Usually after a conflict is resolved, the bonding between co-workers increases.

(f) People come to understand each other better after a conflict, thus reducing chances of further conflict.

(g) In some sort of way, conflicts also release pent up strain (Horton, Bayerl & Jacobs, 2014).

These conflicts need to be resolved in a proper fashion so as to maintain a balance in the workplace. The proper management of these conflicts constitutes the Conflict Management theory.

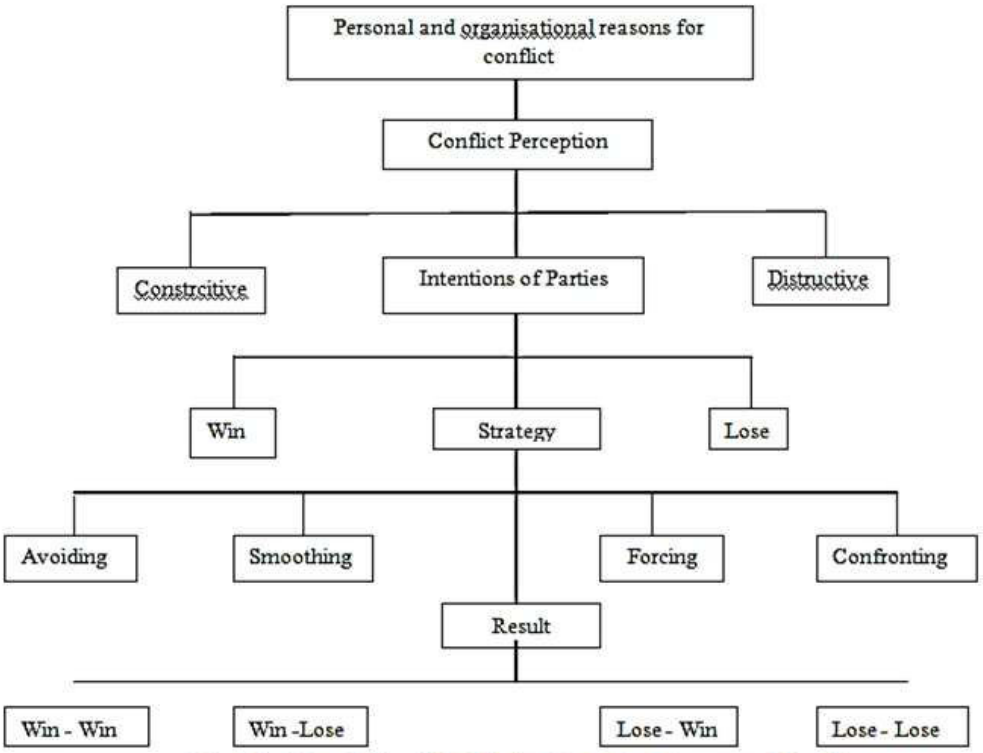
Managing Outcomes of Organizational Conflicts

Anderson (1990) and Burton (1987) maintain that conflict management has a wide application. Burton (I987) goes on to state that the significant feature of conflict management is that it is an attempt by the status quo to manage the dispute, or to avoid escalation of the conflict. Conflict resolution refers to dealing with or removing the cause of the conflict. Ways of managing organizational conflict are as varied as its causes, origins and contexts. The purpose of conflict management, whether undertaken by the parties in conflict or whether involving the intervention of an outside party is to affect the entire structure of a conflict situation so as to contain the destructive components in the conflict process (e.g. hostility, use of violence) and help the parties possessing incompatible goals to find some solution to their conflict. Effective conflict management succeeds in:

(1) minimizing disruption stemming from the existence of a conflict, and

(2) providing a solution that is satisfactory and acceptable. All organizations, however simple or complex, possess a range of mechanisms or procedures for managing conflict. The success or effectiveness of such procedures can be gauged by the extent to which they limit conflict behavior and the extent to which they help to achieve a satisfactory solution.

Conflicting Resolution Model



(Conflict Resolution Model Based on Newstorm and Davis)

Different people use different strategies for managing conflict. Usually we are not aware of how we act in conflict situations. We just do whatever seems to come naturally. But we do have a personal strategy; and because it is learned, we can always change it by learning new and more effective ways of managing conflicts. When you become engaged in a conflict, there are two major concerns individuals have to take into account:

(1) Achieving your personal goals — Individuals are in conflict because individuals have a goal that conflicts with another person's goal. Individual goal may be of high importance to him, or it may be of little importance to him.

(2) Keeping a good relationship with the other person — Individuals may need to be able to interact effectively with the other person in the future. The relation-ship may be very important to individual or may be of little importance to him. How important your personal goals are to you and how important the relationship is to you affects how you act in a conflict. Given these two concerns, it is possible to identify styles of managing conflict in an organization as follows:

(a) Avoiding: The basic goal of the avoidance is to delay. Person would rather hide and ignore conflict than resolve it. This leads to the uncooperative and unassertive. Person tend to give up personal goals and display passive behavior creating lose-lose situations. Person believes it is easier to withdraw from a conflict rather than to face it. Avoiding strategy may help to maintain relationship that would be hurt by conflict resolution and very effective way to affront conflictive situations at short term. Disadvantage may be conflict remain unresolved, overuse of the style leads to others walking all over them. Appropriate time to use this style when stakes are not high or issues is trivial, when confrontation will hurt a working relationship, when there is little chance of satisfying your wants, when disruption outweighs the benefit of conflict resolution, when gathering information is more important than an immediate decision, when others can more effectively resolve the conflict and when time constraints demand a delay.

(b) Smoothing: Smoothing refers to the conciliation that occurs when one person or group is willing to yield to the other. Smoothing results from a low concern for ones group own interests combined with a high concern for the interest of other group. Smoothing conflict management style emphasis on human relationships. Individuals ignore their own goals and resolve conflict by giving in to others because they see the relationships as of the greatest importance while their own goals are of the least importance. Individuals smooth over the conflict out of fear of harming the relationship, their unassertive and cooperative behavior creates a win/lose situation want to be accepted and liked by others. Individuals think that conflict should be avoided in favor of harmony and that people cannot discuss conflicts without damaging relationships. Individuals are afraid that if the conflict continues, someone will get hurt and that would ruin the relationship. Advantage of Smoothing style is to maintain relationship but giving in may not be productive. Appropriate time to use this style is when maintaining the relationship outweighs other considerations, when suggestions/changes are not important to the accommodator, when time is limited or when harmony and stability are valued.

(c) Forcing: It designates a situation in which one person or group attempts to acquire complete dominance. Individual do not hesitate to use aggressive behavior to resolve conflict. Individual assume that conflict is settled by one person winning and one person losing and they want to be the winner and creating a win-lose situation. Winning gives a sense of pride and achievement. Losing gives an individual a sense of weakness, inadequacy or failure. If individual decision is correct, a better decision without compromise can result. If individual decision is incorrect it may breed hostility and resentment toward the person using it. This style is appropriate when quick decisive action is vital; on important issues where unpopular actions need implementing, example, Cost cutting.

(d) Confronting: Confronting style refers to strong cooperative and assertive behavior. It is the win-win approach to interpersonal conflict handling. The person using confronting desires to maximize joint results. An individual who uses this style tends to see conflict

as natural, helpful, and leading to a more creative solution if handled properly. Exhibit trust in others and conflict is resolve to the satisfaction of all. Confronting style is most practical to find an integrative solution when both sets of concerns are too important to be compromised, when objective is to learn, to gain commitment by incorporating concerns into a consensus and to work through feelings that have inferred with a relationship.

Organization Structure based conflict resolutions:

Structure of an organization provides fuel to create conflict situation. If conflict is not managed properly it becomes dysfunctional or destructive.

The following are the ways to manage structure based conflict:

(1) Super ordinate goals**:** An organizational goal that is more important to both parties in a conflict than their individual or group goal is a super ordinate goal. Goals cannot be achieved by an individual or by one group alone. The achievement of goal requires cooperation by both parties. Super ordinate goal converts a conflict between departments to friendly interactions, develops favorable attitudes and seeks to achieve solutions that are mutually satisfactory.

(2) Reduce interdependence between groups**:** Interdependency is one of the major causes of conflict. It is necessary to identify and clarify poorly defined and poorly arranged interdependencies through unifying workflow. This work flow can be designed either to increase the interdependencies or to eliminate them entirely. The other option could be to make the two units totally independent of one another.

(3**)** Increase resources: Conflict will occur whenever the wants and needs of two or more parties are greater than the sum of the resources available for allocation. This conflict can be reduced by planning ahead about the proper distribution of such resources instead of making haphazard and last minute allocations.

(4) Mutual problem solving: This is one of the most frequently used techniques for increasing collaboration. It requires the conflicting parties to come together, analyze and define the problem, understand each other's viewpoints and arrive at a rational and objective solution through mutual interactions.

(5) Formal authority**:** When two groups are conflicting each other, top management can use authority to resolve conflict. Management must use Management by Wondering around (MBWA) technique so management will come to know covert conflict in an organization. The superior takes up the role of an arbitrator and integrator.

(6) Increase interactions**:** Organizations should provide more opportunities to the employees in subunits to interact with each other. If people interact with each other not only would they develop better understanding of each other's way of functioning but also may discover common interests, problems and priorities.

Appointment of Ombudsperson, Cross fertilization, merger, rules, procedures and policies also helps in resolving structure based conflict in an organization. According to Derr, Contingency theory is one of the conceptual tools useful for managing organizational conflicts. He stated that there are three major conflict management approaches from which intervener can draw to formulate an approach appropriate for resolving dispute; Collaboration, bargaining and Power play. The appropriate use of these methods depends on the individual and organizational state.

Collaboration involves people surfacing their differences and then work on the problems until they have attained mutually satisfactory solutions. This approach assumes that people will be motivated to expend the time and energy for such problem solving activity.

Bargaining on the other hand assumes that neither party will emerge satisfied from the confrontation but that both through negotiation can get something they do not have at the start or more of something they need, usually by giving up something of lesser importance. One party generally wins more than the other; by the skillful use of tactical orders, he can get the maximum possible from the other side.

Third approach is Power play, which differs from the other two approaches because its emphasis is on self interest. Whereas, in collaboration and bargaining the two sides come together to try to resolve their problems, when power is the dominant mode, the actions are unilateral or in coalitions acting unilaterally.

Managerial Initiative in Conflict Management

Managers should develop diverse but appropriate strategies to resolve and manage conflicts as they arise before escalating to unmanageable level.

(1) Establish formal procedures – for dispute resolution, grievances and disciplinary issues

(2) Explain plans – link individual performance targets to the overall business plans so everyone feels involved.

(3) Listen – consultation is the key to involving employees in decision-making

(4) Reward fairly – pay is seldom far from people's minds

(5) Work safely – think about use of computers, smoking, stress and drugs as well as noise, dust and chemicals.

(6) Value employees – how would most employees describe the culture within the organization?

(7) Encourage initiative – think about job design and developing individuals

(8) Balance personal and business needs – Flexible working patterns help to improve the work-life balance of employees and the effectiveness of the business.

(9) Develop new skills – It is worth thinking about Invest in People (IIP) to promote training and communication.

(10) Build trust between employee representatives and management – do relationships add value to the organization by working effectively to respond to change.

(11) Efforts should be made by the managers to occasionally stimulate conflict by encouraging divergent views and rewarding staff and unit/department for outstanding performance.

(12) Proper communication procedures should be put in place to resolve conflict. For instance, when any disagreements arise among the employees, it should be reported to the management and then management should get statements from the parties involved, brainstorm the issue and make recommendation on how to resolve the conflict.

(13) Efforts should be made by the management to organize seminars/workshops on organizational conflict management from time to time for the employees. This will enable employees learn about conflict and how it can be effectively managed for individual and organization effectiveness.

(14) Lastly, group interaction and activities should be followed up so as to ensure a degree of functionality compatible to conflicts. Positive conflicts will only be possible if particularities of the organization are analyzed.

Conclusion

Organization is social units divided into hierarchies and departments and individuals. Comparisons, Competition and conflicts between units and subunits always present in organization. Conflict is omnipresent feature at each of the organizational levels. Conflict may be functional or dysfunctional in consequences, it is essential for management to explore various methods and techniques of conflict management. Wide range of conflict management intervention can be utilized to deal with conflict at various organizational levels. Organizations should develop diverse but appropriate strategies to resolve and manage conflicts as they arise before escalating to unmanageable level.

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